

To the Editor

"Autocrats' Dilemma: You Can't Arrest a Virus" by Declan Walsh (April 6)

Likening Turkey to an autocracy is a tired fiction and a mere repetition of unsubstantiated biases.

That aside, in these unprecedented difficult times, nobody is at liberty to hoard much needed goods or deliberately mislead the public in order to provoke panic and civil disorder.

Turkey's geography, in the heart of Eurasia, puts us at a greater risk of exposure to this pandemic. Examining Turkey's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is important, and Turkey's ability to manage this in the right way matters. It matters for our citizens, first and foremost, but also to successful containment in the two regions we connect.

Your article fails to note that the government's response has been swift, benefitting from reforms and investments that make universal healthcare accessible to all citizens. In recent years, Turkey has intensively invested in its health workforce and built new hospitals, and is therefore well equipped to handle this outbreak.

As a matter of fact, since the outset of the pandemic, we've also provided medical assistance to several other countries that are in dire need of support.

On the other hand, to cushion the blow to businesses and households, the government also adopted a number of economic measures, including reduction in taxes and direct financial assistance to families in need.

We welcome fulsome consideration and accurate portrayals of what we're doing to contain COVID-19 in Turkey and beyond.

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